JULY 12, 1967

Voters Reject Plan To Merge De Pere Schools

DE PERE (PG) — Consolidation of school districts at De Pere was rejected by 312 votes in a special referendum Tuesday.

The final tabulation in an extremely light turnout showed 916 yes votes to 1,228 against. The total vote of 2,124 was less than half the number tallied in an advisory referendum last April when 4,351 electors participated and consolidation received a tentative endorsement, 2,562 to 1,789.

Merger Hopes Quashed

Rural opposition quashed all hopes of a merger at this time. The vote in attached areas showed 100 in favor of consolidation and 563 opposed. This was enough to kill the referendum question relating to merger of De Pere Joint School Dist. No. 1 and West De Pere Joint School Dist. No. 2 as posed by CESA Agency 9 following a public hearing June 5.

In the city, consolidation carried by 153 votes, 816 to 663. Under Wisconsin statutes, the proposal had to be approved in both city precincts and in attached rural areas. Consolidation carried only in the 1st and 2nd Wards but the margin of yes votes was sufficient to offset a negative attitude in the 3rd and 4th Wards.

Commenting on the outcome, Fred Jones, co-chairman of the Committee opposing Consolidation, said he believed electors, particularly in the attached rural areas, were not prepared to make a change so soon after the advisory referendum. He contended the advisory referendum asked only for a complete study of eventual consolidation.

Growt Disappointed

Mayor John Growt, obviously disappointed with the turnout and the outcome, said it is obvious that many electors, particularly in the attached areas, do not fully appreciate the problems separate school systems pose for the city of De Pere in the conduct of municipal affairs, particularly financing.

He said non-residents apparently are vitally interested in extension of services to their sectors but fail to grasp the need for closer cooperation in other vital fields, such as education.

Commenting on Tuesday's vote outcome, John David, administrator of CESA Agency 9, said the agency's order of June 5 is now void and the issue of consolidation at De Pere is no longer a subject for initiation by the agency.

The referendum tally by ward and rural precinct:

De Pere—1st Ward, yes—332, no—71; 2nd Ward, yes—271, no—72; 3rd Ward, yes—88, no—188; 4th Ward, yes—125, no—332. City totals—yes—816, no—663.

Attached Areas—De Pere, yes—32, no—43; Glenmore, yes—2, no—43; Morrison, yes—7, no—11; Rockland, yes—22, no—37; Wrightstown, yes—0, no—2; Bellevue, yes—0, no—5; Hobart, yes—8, no—174; Lawrence, yes—29, no—201; Oneida, yes—0, no—49. Attached totals: yes—100; no—563. Grand totals: yes—916, no—1228.